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MARY CAREY

MEDITATIONS FROM HER NOTE BOOK OF 1649-1657

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MEDITATIONS FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF MARY CAREY 1649-1657

printed & sold by
FRANCIS MEYNELL
67 ROMNEY STREET
WESTMINSTER
1918

DEDICATION

If the printer has any right of dedication, then:

TO

LILIAS

and to ROBERT *in prison*

242
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THE PRINTER TO THE READER

A manuscript Note Book of the time of the Commonwealth, written in very charming characters, bound in contemporary covers of blue velvet, was lately found by Ev. M. in the sixpenny pile of a bookstall. It is from among the contents of this Note Book that I have chosen the passages now printed. The spelling has been modernised, as the easiest way (but, I admit, by no means the best) of securing uniformity where none existed. The order of the several pieces is not that of composition (all but one are dated) but of the

Engl. Lit. Eng. 13 Aug 20 Seventeenth S 8/6

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pages in the original manuscript.

Evelyn's *Life of Mrs.* Godolphin *shewed that spirituality could flourish, in that amazing 17th century, in that amazing England, at the courts of profligate kings.* Mary Carey's *Note Book is a remarkable, if much less remarkable, shewing of a remarkable, if much less remarkable, thing—the spiritual passion of Puritanism. It is a history of* God's *dealings with her since she became one of* "God's *people"—a history that shews her resignation as great as her submission* ("*mon cœur est soumis, mais n'est pas résigné,*" *wrote* Victor Hugo) *when calamity struck her blow upon blow through her children.*

"The occasion of my writing this following dialogue," she says, "was my apprehending I should die upon my fourth child." In fear, then, but in calmness, in recollection of herself but in zeal for her husband's good, this Note Book was made; and for his eyes only. I fortify myself against the feeling that I have no right, after the three centuries of their privacy, to finger these pages and print and publish them, with a precedent: the precedent of "The Mother's Legacy," by Elizabeth Jocelin. *This was written on a like reticent occasion, "only to the eyes of a most loving husband" from a woman with child; and it was published, her husband not disapproving,*

two years after her death. In origin, in design, in feeling, there are close affinities between the two Note Books; and Mary Carey *may well have read "The Mother's Legacy," for of it seven editions were published in her life-time. Here are sentences from* Elizabeth Jocelin's *letter to her husband:*

"*I no sooner conceived an hope that I should be made a mother by thee, but with it entered the consideration of a mother's duty, and shortly after, the apprehension of danger that might prevent me from executing that care I so exceedingly desired, I mean in religious training our child. And in truth death appearing in this shape was doubly terrible unto me. . . .*

Thus resolved, I writ this ensuing letter to our little one, to whom I could not find a fitter hand to convey it than thine own. . . . But I know thou wonderest by this time what the cause should be that, we two continually unclasping our hearts to each other, I should reserve this to writing. When thou thinkest thus, dear, remember how grievous it was to thee but to hear me say, I may die, *and thou wilt confess this would have been an unpleasant discourse to thee, and thou knowest I never durst displease thee willingly, so much I love thee. . . . Thine inviolable,* Eliza Jocelin."

Nine days after the birth of her daughter, "having patiently

borne a violent fever, and giving a comfortable testimony of her godly resolution, she ended her prayers, speech and life together."

But with Mary Carey *the apprehension of death for herself proved false: she did not die upon her children, but they upon her; five of them, each at the time of its death an only child.*

To her first husband (she was married perhaps before she was eighteen, & into a "frivolous set") she makes but one allusion: "I had tenderly loving parents, good husbands: the last is so, and good was it for me that I was wife to the first." It would be easy—and easy to be wrong—to read into that a

kind of saintly ambiguity of forebearance.

But her devotion to her second husband, who shared her beliefs, her sorrows, her resignation, her talent of verse, and her final happiness of children, is manifest and lovely in the Dedication. One may guess that he held some post, civil or military, in the Commonwealth forces: he sojourned with his wife in many garrison towns during the civil wars, so that she writes that she was "safe in garrison in all these wars, nor separated from my dear relations." They were in London at one time of plague. In the list of those places in which they lived may be noted "dear Katherine's"—that "dear"

as near to "Saint" (who shall say that it is not nearer to sanctity than our accustomed word?) as a Puritan might go. Of the deaths of her children these pages are full. Not all her heroism, not all her voluntariness, not the passing of these hundreds of years, can make the sequence of tragedies fail to "shock" one. But let the reader take heart of comfort. He will find this at the end: "Now I want not the desired mercy of children. One was my greatest number formerly, but now GOD *gives and continues me two, a son and a daughter. Blessed be* GOD *for* Bethia, *and for* Nathaniel."

TO MY MOST LOVING
AND DEARLY BELOVED
HUSBAND
GEORGE TAYLER
ESQUIRE

MY DEAR

The occasion of my writing this following dialogue was my apprehending I should die on my fourth Child; and undoubtedly expecting a combat with *Satan* at last, when he would be in the fullness of power and malice and I at weakest; and desiring to be armed against him, fitted for my death, quiet and comfortable as to my spiritual condition: I thought it necessary and profitable for all these ends, to look back and take a view of the LORD's

work upon my soul, and so to collect my evidences, that I might answer *Satan*, and argue for myself, from mercy to mercy, from love to love, from free grace shewed here to endless glory possessed hereafter. And truly, my dear, my endeavour herein was very successful through mercy, for I not only found what I sought (GOD's dealing with me in love and faithfulness clearer than formerly, in regard of an exact calling to my mind of such scriptures, and the powerful setting them upon my heart, that the LORD made use of as the means of my conviction, conversion and building up) but I also gained

much comfort by having so many testimonies in present sight, of the dear love of my GOD; yea, by tracking GOD's method of mercy, power and sweetness formerly to me.
Now my dear heart, I think it my duty to tell thee my experiences of GOD in a threefold respect: first, that your love may be increased towards him by what you hear of him; secondly, that you may help me to praise the LORD for his goodness towards me as you hear it and read it; thirdly, that you may labour after and be partaker of those sweet and bosom comforts which are in GOD more than every believer knows and finds. The

LORD deserveth all our love for his loveliness, for by experience I know him to be freely merciful, abundantly good, excellent in beauty, full in sweetness, faithful in covenant, bountiful in giving, and tenderly loving; GOD is a sanctuary for defence, a present help in trouble, he hears me, sees me, cares for me, loves me continually and constantly; GOD knows, and gives, and does what is good; there's wisdom, there's love, in all he doeth to me, and for me, by his powerful and seasonable coming in at a pinch. Ah, my dearest, that you and I could eye, study, know, admire the love of GOD. Ah,

it's past all knowledge for height, depth, length, and breadth, and the actings thereof beyond all expressions: a sweet subject for continual meditation. Love melts, love wins, love joys; ah, dear love of GOD, thou precious attribute, had it not been for thee, what had become of all GOD's people? My dear heart, the taste of this love will keep us in these backsliding days from leaving the fountain for broken cisterns.

LORD, make me full of love, brim full.

O this lovely grace, this beloved grace; my dear, let's labour for it and endeavour the increase of it in one an-

other towards GOD; and in special, let's take care to build up one another in our most holy faith. Alas, I am a weak help, but I will seek the LORD, that the poor mite of my endeavours, added to the treasury of those rich spiritual means which GOD affords thee, shall be accepted by thee and blessed by him for thy good. Therefore, my dear, I humbly present these lines to thee, and have told thee my ends in so doing. I have more need, and am more ready and desirous to receive from thee, and GOD hath done and will do me much good by thee every way. Truly, my dear, you are high in my

thoughts, and deservedly: GOD hath begun a work in thee which he will perform. I partly know the change which GOD hath made in thee both inwardly and outwardly, from what and to what; I see much in thee, and praise GOD for it. And were I to speak what you should not hear, and to write what you read not, I could and would say much in thy praise upon just grounds; but being I speak to you I must deny myself herein. Yet shall I to avoid the false suspicion of flattery be guilty of ingratitude; give me leave to take liberty for one word: to say that I daily bless GOD for thee,

and esteem thee the best of all my outward blessings, the sweetest of all my creature comforts. Yea, as precious a mercy to me in thy relation (every way considered) as any wife doth enjoy; I wish I were to thee what thou deservest, and had power to express my affection further than I can: but I hope the LORD will reward thy love and goodness towards me. My dear, let's daily, with thankfulness, remember GOD's mercy in bringing us together, and for the variety of those great mercies we have since jointly enjoyed. GOD hath given us divers sweet babes, and though he hath in wisdom

removed them from our present sight, yet are they in the bosom of GOD, and we shall find them one day made perfect in glory. We have enjoyed much love and true content. We have been kept together in these separating troubles, a mercy I have oft begged and GOD hath given it; and I value thy presence and company beyond any and all my outward comforters. Moreover, my dear, GOD hath always put us in safe places in these times of war; and given us plenty in these times of wants. GOD hath also made us of one mind, our judgements are one, our wills, our way, our aims in spirituals;

and it is no small mercy, to be totally freed from any of those many sufferings which a married condition makes many sensible of. Now preventing mercy hath kept us from knowing them, but as we may guess by the rule of contraries. O our good GOD, praised be his name, as for mercies personal, so for mercies conjugal, as for the mercies of a single life, so for the mercies of our married condition. I shall now, my dear, beg thy watchfulness over me, against sin, and thy prayers for me. A Christian's experience will teach him what petitions he should frame in the behalf of another; let this be thy

rule, it shall be mine in my daily prayers to the Father for thee, even the Father of Mercies into whose sweet embraces I recommend thee, remaining most Good and Dear Husband,

thy much obliged and most affectionate wife,

MARY CAREY.

Octo: 17th: 1653.

FEBRUARY 11TH, 1649

A DIALOGUE BETWIXT THE SOUL AND THE BODY

SOUL

My sister, why art thou so sore cast down, hath anything befallen thee?

BODY

Dear sister, the LORD hath taken from me a son, a beloved son, an only son, an only child, the last of three, and it must needs affect me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion

on the son of her womb? Besides, I am now near the time of my travail, and am very weak, faint, sickly, fearful, pained, apprehending much sufferings before me, if not death itself, the king of terrors.

SOUL

First, for the removal of the child, know that it is GOD's will, to which submit not one word, and do not only yield, but approve: GOD is wise and knows it best, GOD is loving and therefore did it. And for thy fear of death, know, CHRIST hath unstung him. Paul disputes it with him, and in a holy triumph cries out: O death, where is thy sting; O grave,

where is thy victory. He sees it overcome by CHRIST, both in his own person, and by his own power, for all his people, so that death is now no enemy, but a necessary friend, whom GOD hath appointed to carry us to CHRIST.

☞ BODY

But my sister, thou knowest that when I shall be dissolved thou wilt leave me, and go immediately to thy place, but I must lie in the grave, rot, putrify, and have no enjoyments until our re-vinting: and therefore, my dear soul, let me know, what I may then hope for, that so I may lie down in peace and expectation.

SOUL

This query, my beloved sister, is most pleasant, and welcome to me. I hope my answer shall give thee some satisfaction. It was ye LORD's pleasure to smite me with a sore sickness (in my apprehension, it was unto death) when I was about eighteen years old, in the midst of my jollity, when I was taking my fill of worldly contentments, and restrained my heart from nothing it fancied to follow, delighting myself & spending my time in carding, dice, dancing, masking, dressing, vain company, going to plays, following fashions, and the like. In this sickness I began to

think that GOD had given me a time in the world, which I was now quitting, but I knew not GOD, nor what would become of me for Eternity. I found myself in a miserable and hopeless condition, which made me wish, *O that* GOD *would spare my life till I learn to know him; O might I live, I would forever quit all my vain company, leave my most beloved pleasures, be a careful hearer of* GOD'S *word, and give myself up to his service* GOD did please to call back my life from the grave, and restored me to my health and strength, which free mercy did so win upon my heart, that I found my resolutions, in the time of my sickness,

much strengthened, but I knew not how to get one step forward in this great work, only I sequestered myself from all my former company and sinful delights, and my spirit was very restless and full of enquiry.

☞ BODY

But what couldest thou do in this condition? Thou wert a stranger unto GOD, to his word, to his people, to all means and helps.

☞ SOUL

'Tis very true. I neither did nor could do anything, but GOD did all, and thus: He removed my dwelling, and set me under a powerful ministry. Powerful may I call it? Even the power of GOD,

sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing, dividing soul and body, joints and marrow, a discerner of my heart and thoughts. Had not GOD spoke first to my heart in his word, it had never spoke to him in prayer. This word I say, even every sermon I heard, did so find me out and discover me, unto myself, that I thought there was no reprobate in hell more sinful than I. I found myself equal with them in original sin, beyond most in actual sin. My sins were laid before me, *Satan* let loose upon me, so far as to tempt, terrify, upbraid, challenge me for his own; and worst of all, I believed GOD mine

enemy, his wrath and hell my portion for Eternity. O what confusion was in my thoughts day and night. I durs't not eat, nor drink, but to keep life, nor take any comfort from any creature, that I could want. None can apprehend this but those who know it. I thought I had no interest in CHRIST, and therefore no right to any creature, but was confident to suffer for the least refreshment I had (either from meat, drink, sleep, clothes, fire, company, &c.) in hell.

☞ BODY

Didest thou get no comfort from the word preached, nor read, nor from other good

books, nor company, nor prayer? When and how did GOD come in? This was very sad. When wilt thou shew me how thou gottest assurrance, and how it is now with thee? Thou leadest me far about. Wer't thou long in this condition?

SOUL

Truly, long as it was, as I thought; many months, almost a year, before I got any abiding or firm comfort, and all those means I used made me still worse, for I could use none aright. I could not believe a promise, nor give obedience to any precept, nor could I pray. I knew not what to call GOD, nor apprehend that CHRIST was

offered me; all GOD's attributes (now Comforts) were then terrors. And indeed I took part with *Satan* in disputing against Comfort. In this sad condition of desertion I lay under the arrest of divine Justice. But when the time, the sweet time came, that GOD did declare his free grace, his abundant love to me, in the gift of the treasure of heaven and earth, JESUS CHRIST, he set himself so forth to my apprehension, both by his word and spirit, as a GOD seeking reconciliation with me, in JESUS CHRIST, making him mine, and all CHRIST's mine, and I in CHRIST, his. The LORD JESUS was shewed me

in that excellency: O! and in that excellency *mine;* notwithstanding all unworthiness; the multitude of my sins; the stainings of unbelief. O I may say, I know not what to say: the goodness, the compassion, the love of GOD, was unspeakable; the beauty of CHRIST surpassing; especially considering my need of him, and his fitness for me. I was a poor damned wretch, both in desert and in my own belief; no means in heaven nor earth to save me from guilt, from sin, from the curse of the law, from the wrath of GOD, from *Satan*, from hell, but CHRIST. And I durst not go to him, but he came to

me with outstretched arms; his word told me of him, which then I did believe; his spirit did so follow me with such sweet whisperings, strong assurances, filling comforts, unspeakable joys, especially in prayer, that my soul was as in a corner of heaven, feasted with such delicacies as none knows or can understand, but by like experience.

I was a grievous sinner. Nothing can stead a sinner but a CHRIST. CHRIST *saves his people from their sins; thou shalt call his name* JESUS, *for he shall save his people from their sins.* CHRIST saves us from the power of sin; *sin shall not have dominion over you.*

CHRIST saves us from the punishments of sin, for *he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed, the* LORD *hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

I apprehended GOD mine enemy formerly, but now in CHRIST reconciled to me. No sight of a reconciled GOD, but through a crucified CHRIST. *There is a ministry of reconciliation given unto the ambassadors of* CHRIST, *as though* GOD *did beseech us by them and pray us in* CHRIST'S *stead to be reconciled to* GOD. *And now, in* CHRIST JESUS, *ye who sometime were far off*

are made nigh by his blood. And now, I did daily see so much happiness, by an interest in JESUS CHRIST, that the tongue of man and angel cannot express it. O how many worlds would I have given, had I possessed them, to have been freed from my forementioned miseries and terrors. And all these were removed by my powerful Saviour JESUS CHRIST, and yet there was more fullness in the love of my sweet LORD than to stay here, for he shewed unto me what incomparable benefits I have yet further in him, and by him.

I hope I shall never forget my prayer mercies, nor that

mercy the spirit of praying. Prayer was the first place where the promise carried me to seek GOD in CHRIST; and prayer was the first place where GOD appeared to me as my GOD in CHRIST, and assured me of reconciliation with himself for his son's sake, by the sweet language of his own spirit; and I found all that free, full, faithful promise had told me of, made good unto me.

And I have ever since found the LORD in the same place. Ever I say, when I have carried my whole heart to seek him, and when my chief end, my chief concern in these petitions I put up were for his glory. I know that

when I have gone to GOD in a negligent, formal, careless, selfish manner, then I got nothing but shame of face and grief of heart. And many, yea innumerable times have been the indisposition and evil disposition of my heart to and in prayer. My memory is charged, and overcharged with miscarriages in this kind, but whenever I have carried my heart to GOD, I have found immediate mercy.

Prayer mercies have been free mercies. I have oft sought the LORD in some things wherein my conscience appeared before him with much guilt in that particular, and could not but

dictate to me much wrath and suffering; now even in that very thing, contrary to desert & expectation, I have received wonderful mercy.
Prayer mercies are full mercies; full indeed, for GOD hath given me, first, what I have asked; secondly, better than I have asked; thirdly, more than I have asked; fourthly, above what I could ask or think.
This seems large, but it is no more than by experience I know true: And true it will ever be, because it is promised so to be: GOD is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.
Prayer mercies are sudden

mercies if our need be to have them so. *If his people call, the* LORD *shall answer; if they cry he shall say, here I am. He is a* GOD *hearing prayer.* So may my soul proclaim him to be. This then I say, for I have taken special notice of it, that I never carried a troubled heart unto the LORD in prayer (and I think I have had as often and as greatly a depressed heart in general extremities as many have had), but I have sensibly received mercy, either easing mercy or comforting mercy, or supporting mercy, or something hath been done to my heart in mercy; it hath been put in a waiting or an ex-

pecting frame until it got satisfaction; and was not this mercy?

Prayer mercies are continual mercies. It is always term time in heaven, we may commence a suit every moment. Prayer mercies are certain mercies; they are mercies in promise, we may rely on them, they cannot fail. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee. Ask what you will and it shall be done unto you.* When I have foreseen and apprehended any great suffering before me, as the death of my children (and all my children were only children; each child when it died was all that I had alive; a heart-terrifying

sorrow), or as some hideous temptation or death, etc., when I have looked on the weight of the affliction or trial that was coming, and looked also upon my own weakness and unfitness for to bear it, my flesh hath crept for fear, my spirit hath fainted; but blessed, blessed, yea ten thousand times ten thousand blessed be my GOD, my prayer-hearing GOD, who hath been with me in all times and in all straits, and hath ever given me free, full, sudden, certain, hearing, answering mercies in prayer. My flesh and my heart faileth, but GOD *is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* GOD

hath fitted me for a Cross, and made that easy when it came which afar off seemed insupportable.

BODY

Ah, dear soul, what a large story hast thou told me of mercies. GOD's dealing towards thee hath been nothing else but mercy; he began with mercy, and every step since hath been mercy. Much, yea very much, may I tell of the LORD's bountiful goodness towards me. I have had a large portion of all outward things; there's nothing that was good for me, or desired of me, but the LORD hath given it, and the best of each kind have I enjoyed. Indeed, GOD hath

sometimes, for a little while, withheld a mercy, that I might know the worth of what I had, and the better prize it, when it was restored. This I found great mercy; as the taking away of health, ease, strength, outward contentments of what sort soever; these again GOD did seasonably restore, and in all times of my troubles GOD came to visit me, and he ever brought me a satisfactory supply of all my wants. And what GOD hath removed, as not good for me to have, he hath made it up in himself.

This should not be overlooked, dear Soul, the good things I have had; I say

what I have had hath been exceeding good, and most properly good for me: thus my parents, husbands, children, friends, food, raiment, dwelling, servants, several conditions, &c.: but mercies to thee, my dear sister, that's love indeed.

☞ SOUL

Let the consideration of GOD's free, full, singular, continual, constant, eternal, best love to me, stir up and increase abundantly my love to him, dear him. Ah, love him, love him, my Soul, and let love be the ground of all thy obedience, both doing and suffering. Let thee and I, my dear Body, all thy members, all my faculties,

even the whole man, give up ourselves unto our GOD, our good GOD, unto his service, unto his dispose.

Well may we trust him with all that's ours, who hath taken care of us for here and for eternity; let us patiently suffer his will in all things; willingly surrendering what he pleaseth to call for.

What can we want, that hath CHRIST.

Let us labour together to glorify GOD, whilst we abide together.

When our parting time comes, let us both joy in it, for I shall go to GOD, and thou shalt rest in thy chamber till the day of CHRIST's appearing, and then, dear

sister, we shall meet again, never to part.
Then we shall be revinted one to another, both unto CHRIST, then we shall be able to recount all the LORD's goodness;
Then we shall perfectly praise him;
Then we shall get saints and angels and all in heaven to help us praise him. *O sweet!* And we shall have an Eternity of time to do it in. *O convenient!*
And we shall enjoy GOD, and CHRIST, and the SPIRIT for ever, and never sin more.
Now to our dear and merciful GOD the Father, to our dear and tenderly loving GOD the Son, to our dear

comforter and guider, GOD the Holy Ghost, be all praise, thanks, glory, honour ascribed, from all in earth and in heaven, especially from my soul and body, for now and ever, world without end *Amen:*

MA: CAREY.

¶ Written by my dear husband at the death of our fourth (at that time only) child *Robert Tayler:*

DEAR WIFE, *let's learn to*
get that Sacred Skill
Of free submission to GOD'S
holy will:
He like a potter is, and we
like clay,
Shall not the potter mould us
his own way?
Sometimes it is his pleasure
that we stand
With pretty lovely babies in
our hand:
Then he in wisdom turns the
wheel about
And draws the posture of those
Comforts out

Into another form: either this
or that
As pleases him, and 'tis no
matter what
If by such changes GOD *shall*
bring us in
To love CHRIST JESUS, *and to*
loath our sin.

GEO: TAYLER.

Covengarden:
Decemb: 8th: 1650.

¶ Written by me at the same time: on the death of my fourth and only child *Robert Tayler:*

MY LORD *hath called for*
my son,
My heart breathes forth, thy
will be done.

My all that mercy hath made mine
Freely's surrendered to be thine.
But if I give my all to thee
Let me not pine for poverty:
Change with me, do; as I have done
Give me thy all, even thy dear son.
'Tis JESUS CHRIST, LORD, *I would have,*
He's thine, mine all, 'tis him I crave:
Give him to me, and I'll reply
Enough, my LORD, *now let me die.*

MARY CAREY.

Covengarden:

Decemb: 8th: 1650.

¶ Written by me at the death of my fourth son and fifth child *Perigrene Tayler:*

I THOUGHT *my all was*
given before,
But mercy ordered me one more:
A Perigrene, my GOD *me sent,*
Him back again I do present
As a love token, 'mongst my
others,
One daughter, and her four dear
brothers,
To my LORD XT.: *my only bliss*
Is, he is mine, and I am his.
My dearest LORD, *hast thou*
fulfill'd thy will,
Thy handmaid's pleas'd; com-
pletely happy still.

MARY CAREY.

Grove St: May 12th: 1652.

May 14th: 1652.

I have now buried four sons and a daughter. GOD hath my all of children: I have his all (beloved CHRIST) a sweet change: in greatest sorrows content and happy.

M: C:

A Commemoration of the love of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Outward mercies I have had, of every kind, which is not the portion of every child. The Lord formed me and gave me right proportion in the womb; he hath given me all my senses, food and raiment, both for use, ornament and delight. I had tenderly loving parents, & good husbands: the last is so, and good was it for me that I was wife to the first. God hath given me lovely

children, sons and daughters five in GOD's bosom, two yet with me; 'tis best for me and them that those that died, died, 'tis best for me and them that those that live, live. Many were the mercies of them that died, and (in some kind) more are the mercies of those that live, and all the mercies of them both were my mercies. GOD hath taken special care of me in times of war: I ever dwelt in safety in times of reigning raging sickness, I have been kept in health in the plague time, and much good have I seen follow to me from disappointments; and who is able to number his preservations from evils

known, and from evils unknown? I have been often delivered, not only from feeling, but fearing, evils of sundry kinds, what dangers were incident to me before my birth, in infancy, childhood and all along my youth, in all places and conditions changes and companies; and considering my first estate in marriage, my then associates and inclination, I must acknowledge my deliverances, and preventing mercies very great, known to GOD and myself. O my Almighty GOD, my faithful, merciful father; were it not for ye what a sad case should thy poor handmaid & all hers be in.

Many great sufferings I never tasted, as want of any outward necessary mercy I never knew, I never wanted for house nor land, loving friends nor useful servants, food, raiment, the comfort of parents, or in their absence, of children, or in their absence, of my husband. I have lived forty-five years and never yet wanted anything that was absolutely necessary at the present, one hour in all my life.

Indeed I had the greatest want of all when I wanted GOD; but so soon as I found a want of him I discerned him, although as an enemy and doing terrible things against me. Yet this was the

supply of my want, and I wanted the enjoyment of GOD no longer than his wisdom knew the fittest time, and then I had a soul-satisfying presence; I bless his name.

I hear *Satan* whisper, *thou sayest not true, I have oft known thee want the light of* GOD'S *countenance, inward peace, strengthening of some graces, and strength against some corruptions, and I have oft foiled thee at such a time.* *Satan*, I know it hath been thus with me, and it was best, for by my want of the sense of GOD'S loving countenance I came to know how I prized it. It set me asking it, and that loss remained as

an awe upon my spirit for time coming.

And my want of inward peace made me search the cause; and a true search is a great advantage. It made me know myself, and sent me to GOD; and GOD gained himself much glory, and me abundance of good, out of such a condition. Thou knowest it.

But if ever I desired what I had not, the fault was there. I shall never indulge any desires but what is limited to GOD's will. I would not have my will, but as mine is his, for I know my own will to be foolish and harmful. Now, as I may say by experience, I never wanted any

mercy, good and absolutely necessary, in time past; so by faith I say, I never shall for time to come. What's that further, *Satan?* I wanted the life of my children, which I importunately begged? I answer ye, when I importunately begged their life, I knew not but GOD's will might be to spare as well as to take; but when I more clearly saw it GOD's will to remove them, I wanted not a heart (of GOD's giving) willingly to surrender them, nor did I want the comfort of them after they were gone, for GOD gave me more than he took from me. More enjoyment of GOD for some of the creature is a sweet

change, and besides, I want not that desired mercy of children, but have now more than ever. One was my greatest number formerly; now great and tender mercy gives and continues me two, a son & a daughter. All my former were sickly, weak, pained, not likely to live; but these have been and are healthful, strong, enjoying ease, hopeful. Blessed be GOD for *Bethia*, and *Nathaniel*, and all their mercies, and let their births and all the rest never be forgotten by me, and all my deliverances of each of them all. Strong & faithful was my GOD, good, good to both mother and child at such a time. Great was

mine and their danger: eminent was mine and their mercies, blessed be GOD, praise be to GOD. I never wanted nurses, keepers, doctors, &c.; for all these and the success of their endeavours I bless GOD my father, for all my mercies in every place, the love of GOD's people, the courtesy of others, all is from him. He gives me favour in the eyes of others, and makes one's enemies at peace with him.

I have lived in Barwick; London oft; Kent; Hunsden; Edenbroughe; Thistleworth; Hackney; Tottrige; Grenwiche; Bednellgrene; Claphame; Yorke; Mountaine; Jameses; Newington;